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Pontrilas House Nov. 3rd 1850

Dear me,

How fast the weeks fly round, here it is Sunday again, & October is gone & November begun — I hope before November ends we shall be quietly settled in London! Tuesday we shall have been here 5 weeks! — And so just at this time Mrs. Bentham is expecting other friends to visit her, I am sure we are in the way — And though Dr. Gray is happy & contented at work, I don't think it would be convenient if I could disappear, for a gentleman could be stowed away anywhere, & a lady takes so much room! We propose to go to Dublin on our way back to London, & I hope to announce soon that we depart in a fortnight from tomorrow — Don't suppose that they are not all that is kind here, or ever let us suppose that we are in the way; but it is very different to me, than if it were a visit of love & affection — And I always have the feeling that I don't wear well, I know how stupid & dull — Pretty nonsense to begin one's journal with! — But the weeks may fly as fast as they please, that bring me nearer you all again. Don't you think I need a desk? My portfolio is so full that my paper gets badly crumpled & shabby — I ought to have got one in London — and shall as soon as I go back!

After I had finished my letter on Thursday there was quite an excitement — a poacher was brought to Mr. Bentham to be tried, as he is a magistrate — he was obliged to send for another magistrate, & one could not come that afternoon, so they were obliged to postpone it until the next morning, & meantime the man, though hand cuffed, managed to escape from the constable, so there was no trial after all — Friday afternoon, as Mrs. Bentham & I were just on the way for a walk, we met Mr. Fowle coming to see if we would walk to Rowlstone, a little church about 1½ miles off — So we turned our steps, through about as muddy a lane as one could well imagine — But we plodded on, holding up our petticoats dauntlessly — The church was charmingly situated at the foot of a hill, & yet on a little elevation, commanding a charming view in front, of hill & valley, wood & field — There was a church yard round it & many fine old yew trees — And just in front of the porch there rose a sort of pyramid in steps, & in a hole in the centre stone, or step, was the mark where the top of the large stone cross used to be — It seems it was the custom in old times to have a cross thus elevated on a pedestal in all church yards, a sweet custom which I think it a pity has passed by — The remains are not common now, but this was very conspicuous — This church had again the old round arch, & such quaint carvings on the door way! It was dedicated when built to St. Peter, & cocks are carved round the capital of the pillars, with wings & tails queerly interlaced with towers, & over the door is a very singular carving of our Saviour seated in a circle, miserably covered with white-wash! The door was so heavy! of thick wood & studded with nails! The interior was not so striking as Kilpeck, but a little singular, there are some of the same figures as there, only half the size, & [illegible] a quaint figure of the Apostle Peter, as it holds the keys — One side [illegible] the [illegible] heads down — There was a most odd candelabras — a sort of iron frame, with the points you see in Catholic churches to put candles on, & cocks above alternate with fleur de lis The church has shared the common fate of white-wash — A large stone font was quite covered with it, but Mr. Fowle & I thought we discovered some traces of carving & he said he would come some day with a knife & try it. Where it had cracked away from the wall in one place, it shewed that the whole interior of the church had probably been painted once in rude fresco — The vane on the top of the tower was a cock after the same fashion as those on the candelabra — We came home across the fields, & one saw the necessity of these foot-paths; for the lanes deep in between the hedges, scarcely are dry all winter, but in the fields it was nice pleasant walking, & the air was fresh & ~~pleasant~~ bright —

Saturday Mrs. Bentham had a letter from her brother saying he would come next Friday — The story is quite a little romance — It seems Sir Harford Brydges has been greatly in the habit of visiting Canada, & at one time took a sort of lease of a house there, & passed months there at a time — His nearest neighbour was a retired naval officer, Captain [illegible], who had a large family of young children, the eldest a little girl — During one of Sir Harford's absences in England the house burned down, quite to his sisters' great relief, who feared he would settle in Canada — [illegible] [illegible] Captain [illegible] moved to Barry on Lake Huron, rather more of a town, & during a visit of Sir Harford's some two years ago, [illegible] died very suddenly, leaving his family in very restricted circumstances — Sir Harford had always talked a great deal of this young girl, & there was supposed to be some attachment but once it was thought all was broken off — But the last day of last August he set sail for America, landed in [illegible], was carried to Toronto, thence to Barry, was married, set off for Boston, & sailed from there the 8th of October, having been absent less than two months when he reached Liverpool — They went at once to his place, Boultibrooke, in Radnorshire, in Wales — Of course there is a great excitement & curiosity to see Lady Brydges, & what sort of a person she may be, brought up in such a out-of-the-way part of the world — One is so sorry she may appear placed so suddenly at the head of an Establishment & titled too — This is the story as I have gathered from little things Mrs. Bentham [illegible] at times —

Thursday Nov. 7th

Sunday morning [illegible] [illegible] a letter from [illegible] Lowell, on his [illegible] [illegible], from Liverpool — I was just beginning to abuse him sadly for his silence, pray thank him for occasioning [illegible], & say I will answer it shortly. We went to church in the morning at [illegible], & Dr. [illegible] a little inclined to face-ache & quite lame; we staid at home when Mr. & Mrs. B. took their afternoon walk — What do you think [illegible] to me? Chilblains I never had such a thing before, & [illegible] was never so [illegible] in [illegible] my feet from cold & damp as I have been since in England & my feet swell so I can scarcely [illegible] my boots on sometimes, & you may be sure it does not add to the grace of my motions, to say nothing of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] — I bathe them in cold water & rub them with spirits of turpentine — [illegible] [illegible] they are much better. Monday morning was rainy & threatening, & [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for a stormy day, for the wind blew & heavy clouds [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], but this climate [illegible] no powers of divining. By noon it was clear & bright, & though [illegible] Mrs. Bentham & I walked after lunch to call at the vicarage (which is on the [illegible]) [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] us, there was no rain — Monday morning I got such a nice [illegible] letter from Dr. Harvey — with a funny story he told about a little niece of his — [illegible] [illegible] are, it seems, Quakers, & this child attended "[illegible] meetings" as they are called, when the reading is supposed to be specially adapted for the young people — but [illegible] went [illegible] — [illegible], her [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] lucky to the "[illegible] meeting" all right — But in the course of the day overheard her saying to one of the other children — "Well — all I heard at the meeting was — "Damnation — my dear friends — the Apostle [illegible]". So, there was not much room to [illegible] on such text!" !

Tuesday I made myself [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], as I have seen [illegible] several [illegible] lately, in tracing some [illegible], Harding's [illegible], for [illegible] a [illegible] in little work [illegible] [illegible] — Mrs. Bentham [illegible] [illegible] in the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] from Hood — "Miss Kilmansegg & her golden leg" & the "[illegible]" — [illegible] of [illegible] how much fun & wit [illegible] [illegible] in them — Tuesday was the 5th of November, when as Dr. [illegible] [illegible],

"That [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible],
When [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]"

& according to Mrs. Bentham,

"Remember [illegible] [illegible], the 5th [illegible] [illegible],
[illegible] Treason's plot
And I see not the reason
Why Gunpowder Treason
Should ever be forgot —"

There seems to be a great deal of excitement in England just now about the act of the Pope in appointing Roman Catholic bishops, & the "Guys" were particularly numerous & good this year in London. I should like to have been there to see them — And I should like to be there on Lord Mayor the 9th, which is Lord Mayor's day — the day show must be worth seeing — They say even in this quiet place they got up a bonfire on the common, & [illegible] hill [illegible] over the village — But I did not see it — Mrs. Bentham reported a bonfire on the hill, a high hill seen from the back of the house. But we thought it was the "Evening Star," which we have seen several times lately. Mrs. Bentham & I wind up the evenings with a game of back-gammon occasionally, in which I shine with my usual brilliancy in being beaten.

Wednesday morn. At breakfast came our weekly budget — this is an awkward time to get letters, & the consequence is I almost lose my breakfast once a week — such a quantity as came! from me & Patrick, from Lizzie & Wm, from Charlie, & from one sister! — You say I am probably surfeited with letters, little, no danger! To me — I am sure I could bear ever so more, more — & do enjoy them — I wish, dear one, I could hear that you were better — You are always patient — But I rejoice in my strength that I may be something again in old place to you when I get back — can come in to see you, can do your errands for you, &c. Pray you & kiss the children for me. My most worthy authoress, I congratulate you! What an honor to see one of the female writers of the family in print! The name too, a good one for one to all mean, Lizzie! But do you know you & Wm. actually filled a sheet, & never said one word about Kittie! I'll turn my back on them, Kittie! I must shake hands with you, Charlie, on enjoying your port, & hope after those two closets are arranged, it may be a long time before you have anything to do with house keeping again — I think you have had quite your share of that trouble of life. And you are very much mistaken, [illegible], if you think your sisters don't appreciate your quiet & patient faithfulness in that sphere. Thank you, Bill, for your nice hints about [illegible], & do say thanks to her for them. I am sure he would have managed to [illegible] would I ever [illegible] her sanction on such an unimportant errand — And, Patrick, I engage you to write me about the children. — I quite picture the parlour as it is now, & particularly admire the new grate — I am quite out of conceit with most of the grates at home, after seeing the pretty one here.

I am going to close with only a meagre sheet to-day, for Mrs. B. & I are going to lunch with Mrs. Fowler & visit the school, & I have promised to shorten my [illegible] accordingly. We have agreed to [illegible] some Saturday & leave me a fortnight from to-day certainly just as you receive this — Most lovingly Jane.

Isn't the [illegible] [illegible] trim candle [illegible] I should have [illegible] the [illegible] whole